

Measuring Outcomes of Cross-Sector Work to Improve Child Safety

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Knowing **what** to measure, **how** to measure it and **why** it is important are all critical to analyzing outcomes

- **What** should you measure?

- Inherent complexities exist in determining the overall health of a system
- Cross-system approach is fundamental – connecting to community indicators and key indicators from other systems particularly important (think preventive/upstream)

Potential Indicators

- ✓ % children living in poverty
- ✓ % babies born with low birthweight or no prenatal care
- ✓ Child death rate/Child maltreatment fatalities or near fatalities
- ✓ Violent crime per 100,000 (community safety)

Source

ACS
Community Health
Community Health and others
Local Law Enforcement

- Several widely used safety measures worth noting within child welfare:

Potential Indicators

- ✓ Maltreatment recurrence in 6 or 12 months
- ✓ Re-entry into care following a permanent discharge
- ✓ Some measure of re-report

Source

CFSR*
CFSR*
More challenging to measure

- Several basic measures to understand system conditions, ideally by age:

Potential Indicators

- ✓ Hotline calls – screen in/out rates
- ✓ Investigations/Assessments & substantiations
- ✓ Entries into foster care
- ✓ Timeliness of permanency by entry cohort and other key performance measures
- ✓ Measures of child well-being

Source

SACWIS
SACWIS/NCANDS*
SACWIS/AFCARS*
CFSR*
More challenging to measure

- **How** to measure these key indicators?

- Use existing resources where this data is already collected and reported – NCANDS, AFCARS, CFSRs
- Cross-system resources that are easily and regularly available and accessible – consider Education, Health Departments first
- A short list of key indicators that are well understood and actionable – consider a balance of lead and lag measures

- **Why** is it important to monitor these indicators in a specific way?
 - Visual display: How data are presented is critical for fostering correct interpretation and actionable analysis
 - Trends over time: Valuable for assessing progress and identifying highs and lows in context of key policy, practice and other changes
 - Targets: Identifying the goal of measuring a particular outcome and determining what progress looks like is a useful way to make trends actionable
 - Benchmarks: Comparing to other counties or the state as a whole may be a meaningful way to understand trends
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Key Resources:

- AFCARS (Adoption & Foster Care Analysis & Reporting System): case-level data state and tribal IV-E agencies are required to submit semi-annually to the federal Children's Bureau on all children in foster care. For more information on AFCARS and what it includes, including a description of proposed changes, visit: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/research-data-technology/reporting-systems/afcars>
- NCANDS (National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System): voluntary data collection system that gathers information from all states about reports of child abuse and neglect to examine trends in child abuse and neglect across the country. For more information on NCANDS and what it includes, visit: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/research-data-technology/reporting-systems/ncands>
- CFSRs (Child and Family Service Reviews): assessment of state's performance related to child welfare. Case reviews are conducted and key indicators are tracked/assessed over time.
 - For more information about the CFSR process and related documentation, visit: <https://training.cfsrportal.org/resources/3105>
 - For more information on the full list of data indicators that will be tracked as part of the CFSR process, visit: <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/05/13/2015-11515/statewide-data-indicators-and-national-standards-for-child-and-family-services-reviews> (see table 1)